

# WESTERN TANAGER



Volume 63 Number 3 November 1996

Los Angeles Audubon Society

## Election Special:

### Comparative Excerpts from Party Platforms

by Travis Longcore

In an era in which political contests have devolved to sound bites and attack ads, often we know too much about the personal lives of candidates and too little about their positions on issues, especially environmental issues. As an antidote, I have compiled portions of political party platforms on three environmental topics directly related to the conservation of birds, wildlife and their habitats: endangered species, forests and forestry, and water policy. Sections pertaining to these topics were found in the Republican Party of California platform, the California Democratic Party platform and the Green Party platform. The excerpts reprinted here are a small sample; the three platforms consider many other environmental issues, including land use, the effects of international trade, energy policy, population, nuclear power, toxics, and agriculture policy. The Reform

Party platform contains no statements on environmental issues.

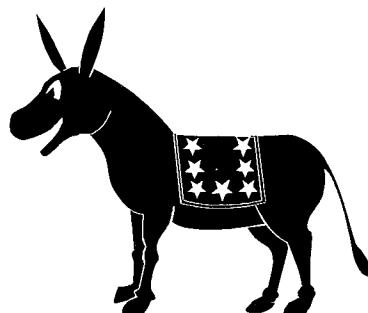
#### ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Republican Party of California:** Recognizing that a balance must be made between economic and environmental priorities; that the Endangered Species Act is having a disastrous impact on the availability of wood and paper products, of food supplies, of water for drinking and for agriculture, and of recreational opportunities; that the Endangered Species Act has already taken away the property rights of thousands of Californians, without just compensation, leaving families, businesses, and communities in financial ruin; and that the Endangered Species Act does not require government bureaucrats to consider the cost of their actions; the Republican Party of California supports:

- Congressional amendment of the Endangered Species Act in a manner that provides balance, recognizing the need for economic benefit and the importance of private property rights, and that provides a mechanism to ensure that these balancing considerations are inserted into all phases of the listing process and

- administrative interpretation, or Congressional amendment, of the Endangered Species Act to consider only species, and not subspecies, when considering possible listing, and that the time review for listing be extended from three months to a minimum of 18 months.

**California Democratic Party:** Support the preservation and expansion of the Endangered Species Act. Species diversity is essential for maintaining whole ecosystems, and may well lead to a variety of presently unknown, but greatly beneficial, future uses, such as medicines and food crops. Oppose the use of sport hunting as a control mechanism for mountain lions.



### **Green Party:**

Ecological systems are diverse and interlocking, and nature's survival strategy can best be found in the adaptability that comes as a result of biological diversity. Although many people may think first of tropical rain forests in reference to the richness of (and threat to) biological diversity, we believe that diversity close to home is worthy of saving, as are the myriad species within the rain forest and its teeming canopy. The Green Party supports, in keeping with this understanding, the reauthorization of a strong "Endangered Species Act" based on the principles of conservation biology.

### **FORESTS AND FORESTRY**

#### **Republican Party of California:**

Recognizing that California is second only to Oregon in the production of forest products; that forests cover 32 percent of the state's lean area; that more and more of the land is reserved exclusively as wilderness; that, unlike most timber producing states, California uses a full 64 percent of its harvest within the state that our forest resources are not unlimited but they are renewable; and that through wise use they will be here for all of our future generations; the Republican Party of California supports:

- protecting multiple use of forest resources (such as, but not limited to, recreation, agriculture, timber production, and gaming) and
- all reasonable efforts to protect the environment and associated economics, and production of our forest resources and products.

#### **California Democratic Party:**

Support extensive reforestation efforts throughout the state; reforestation must include diverse species to maintain habitat for birds and wildlife. Stop the cutting of ancient redwood, fir and cedar trees and allow only select cutting of second-growth trees. Maintain a sustained yield in our forests to ensure future employment while guaranteeing environmental pro-

tection. Export only finished lumber to ensure a stable forest and wood-products industry and to protect jobs. Support acquisition and protection of the 44,000 acre greater Headwaters Forest in Humboldt County, the largest unprotected viable redwood ecosystem in the world. Oppose bills that would change existing forestry laws to allow issuance of long-term harvesting permits of unlimited size for long periods of time and repeal the salvage logging rider.

### **Green Party:**

We call for a halt to all current international funding policies that promote destruction of forest ecosystems and we call for an end to the trade in endangered hardwoods. We support laws that promote paper recycling and mandate SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY practices. We urge protection of "old growth" forests, careful restrictions of commercial cutting on federal and state lands, a ban on all clearcutting, and a reduction of road building on public lands. We are sensitive to the needs of local and rural communities and do not endorse overly restrictive or punitive restrictions on local logging. We support restoration of degraded forest ecosystems through the development of "value-added" economies and "second-growth" logging.

### **WATER POLICY**

#### **Republican Party of California:**

Recognizing that perhaps no single item is as critically important to California as the issue of water; the Republican Party of California supports:

- a water ethic that endorses voluntary conservation and planned reclamation;
- pilot projects for desalination;
- enhanced cooperation and coordination of federal/state water project management and development of a long-range plan to ensure an adequate water supply for the state of California;
- building full-sized, multi-pur-

pose instream storage dams throughout California, where feasible, particularly such long-delayed projects as the Auburn Dam on the American River that will enhance both our water storage capacity and water quality in the Bay/Delta;

- increasing water storage capacity by developing off-stream water reservoirs such as the Los Banos Grande project in the San Joaquin Valley and the Los Vaqueros reservoirs in Contra Costa County;
- recharging important groundwater basins such as the Kern Water Bank;
- ensuring future development of adequate and stable supplies of water to meet the long-term needs of all Californians and scrupulously enforcing the "areas of origin" statute; and
- utilization of water transfer and market concepts.

#### **California Democratic Party:**

Preserve and rehabilitate streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands and estuaries so that they can again produce an abundance of healthy fish. California fisheries provide wholesome food and contribute significantly to the state's economy. End untreated wastewater discharge. Release adequate water supplies from dams at appropriate times to provide the necessary temperatures for salmon and other aquatic life propagation. While long-term environmental rehabilitation is underway, employ fishermen to restore habitat. Protect and restore wetlands: they provide wildlife habitat, contribute to flood and erosion control, and replenish groundwater.

### **Green Party:**

Together we must look ahead and plan for future water uses, as well as today's needs. Who can disagree that clean and sufficient water resources will determine what kind of future we have? With the longer term in mind, we call for elimination of wasteful subsidies on the use of water in agriculture and for municipal water rates to be set high enough, or that other INCEN-

TIVES/DISINCENTIVES be set in place, to discourage the wasteful use of water.

Given the profound importance of clean water, we support the establishment of national, state, and local GROUNDWATER PROTECTION agencies with authority to establish standards for the use of water; to provide tough and timely enforcement of laws enacted; and to protect our aquifers from overuse, depletion and contamination.

We endorse alternative solutions to water treatment and clean-up, for example CONSTRUCTED WETLANDS and biological remediation.

We acknowledge Native American rights regarding water, and urge fair and equitable solutions with tribes on the part of the courts and State Water Engineers. ☐

## LAAS Christmas Bird Counts

### Lancaster CBC, Saturday, December 21, 1996 —

Join a select few intrepid birders who brave the infamous Antelope Valley wind and cold to find such high desert specialties as Mountain Plover, LeConte's Thrasher, and Mountain Bluebird. This is the count where some of the more familiar birds such as Common Crow and Western Scrub-Jay are considered the rarities. One major blessing for the count this year is that it is being held on the shortest day of the year. If you are still interested, call Fred Heath at (805) 389-3203.

### Malibu CBC, Sunday, December 22, 1996 —

This count, situated along the

coast, includes many diverse habitats and consistently logs one of the highest species totals for any CBC within the greater Los Angeles area. Call Larry Allen at (213) 221-2022 if you would like to take part in this fun and exciting count.

### Los Angeles CBC, Sunday, December 29, 1996 —

It is never too soon to plan for the holidays, so put the above date on your calendar now for the annual Los Angeles Christmas Bird Count. Birdwatchers of all ages and abilities are welcome. Special opportunities include rare access to locked reservoirs and the Ballona Wetlands. Be part of the most important citizen science project in the country. To sign up, leave a message for Travis Longcore at Audubon House (213) 876-0202.



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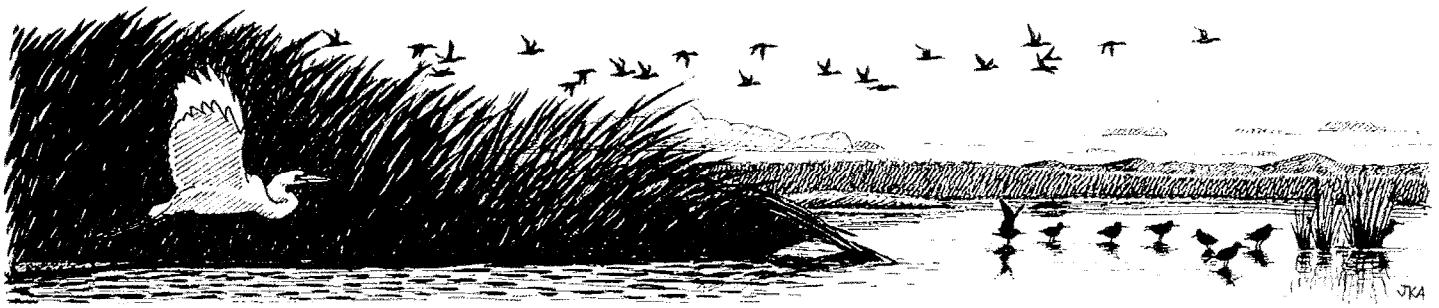
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# CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

Years ago, Los Angeles Audubon ran a field trip every May to the Santa Clara River where it passes under the Golden State Freeway near Valencia. It was a very popular excursion that continued on from there north to excellent little campgrounds on the way to Elizabeth Lake. The Santa Clara was — and still is — a river wild and free with a lush border of willows and cottonwoods. A stroll along the shore for a mile or so yielded a fine assortment of warblers, vireos and orioles with a sprinkling of Lawrence's Goldfinches and Blue Grosbeaks. White-tailed Kites nested, and it was a great place to see perhaps your only Yellow-breasted Chat of the year.

The Santa Clara River arises in the Angeles National Forest east of Soledad Canyon, flows through the Santa Clarita Valley past Magic Mountain and continues almost due west through Ventura County to the Pacific Ocean. The riparian woodland is remarkably unspoiled and supports many species of birds including the endangered Least Bell's Vireo. Historically, the river was home to the Yellow-billed Cuckoo and even today there are rumors of an occasional sighting. The Santa Clara is also an important habitat for a small endangered fish, the Unarmored Three-Spined Stickleback. The river flows past

farms and citrus orchards on its way to its estuary, an outstanding rest stop for migrating shorebirds.

In 1994, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated a 12-mile long, 3500-foot wide segment of the river as "critical habitat" to protect the Least Bell's Vireo. The critical zone extends west from I-5, with almost half its length in Ventura County. The Newhall Land and Farming Co. owns nearly all the land in the zone that encompasses the river in Los Angeles County as well as thousands of acres adjacent to the zone. The owners have long cherished a lucrative future for their Newhall Ranch. They are boldly planning no less than a brand new city!

On 12,000 acres they want to build 24,000 residences with a projected population of 70,000 people. They have already produced a Draft Environmental Impact Report that includes a 200-acre business park, a golf course, a concrete-lined lake, ten schools and 170 acres of neighborhood parks. The effect of a development of this magnitude is simply staggering. Some 1500 acres of rich farmland will disappear in a time when there is mounting concern — especially in California — for vanishing agricultural production. Increased traffic from thousands of autos in an area which already is plagued with

high air pollution is unconscionable. Paving over open land for roads and homes and businesses will increase storm water runoff, adding to the flood potential. And the runoff will carry oil and gas and other familiar urban sources of pollution into the river. The Newhall Ranch project is a flagrant example of urban sprawl that is engulfing the few remaining unspoiled places in Southern California.

In this area the Santa Clara River in summer never runs dry but flows docilely and smoothly in its leisurely path to the sea. When the rains come it can be truly a wild and vigorous river and it sometimes changes its course. Yet the Newhall project would introduce earthen fill into the floodplain and build subdivisions and commercial centers upon it along the river corridor. In this day and age, it is a cardinal sin to build in a floodplain. The cost of cleanup can be steep and is usually paid for by the weary taxpayer. Levees with rip-rap on the banks to control the course of the river are planned. There goes our wild river! The first flood that destroys a home could prompt a call for channelization and we might eventually have another sterile, concrete-lined Los Angeles River.

Opposing Newhall are two dedicated local groups: the Friends of

the Santa Clara River and SCOPE, (the Santa Clarita Organization for Planning the Environment). They are determined activists, meeting with Newhall Ranch people who choose to ignore their arguments, expressing their views of the Land Use Plan to the County Planning Commission, and getting the word out to the public. They point out that there are some 52,000 housing units in Santa Clarita already approved for development that have not yet been built and would easily absorb population growth for some time. They have directly opposed the project as "inappropriate for the site." At the same time, realizing that the Planning Com-

mission might accept the Newhall Ranch blueprint, they are trying to limit the size of the development, moving much of it closer to existing urban zones and away from the river and its floodplain.

In their struggle, the Friends and SCOPE have the support of several chapters of the California Native Plant Society, the Sierra Club, Audubon, the Endangered Habitats League, the Natural Resources Defense Council and other local groups and coalitions. Los Angeles Audubon is glad to be involved; the Board has helped out financially. This is indeed a cause worth fighting for. 

## WESTERN TANAGER

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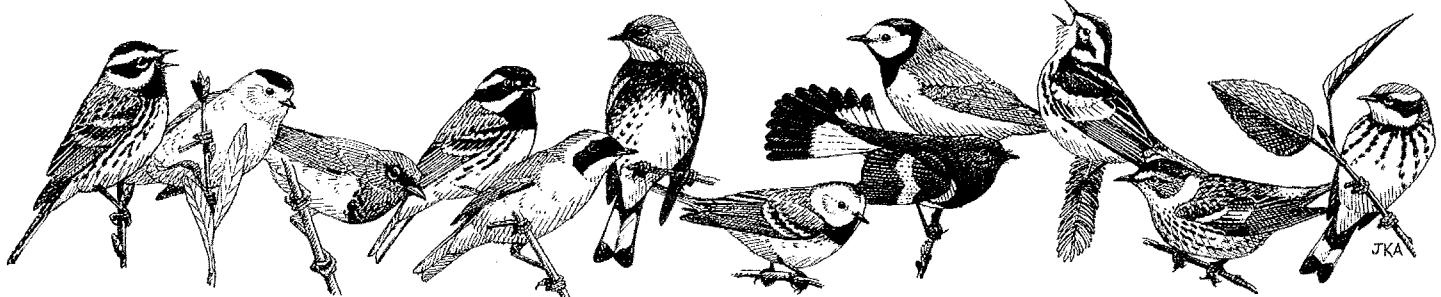
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# BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Hank Brodkin

**N**ovember brings with it the last of the fall vagrants. It is also the time of year that Asian and even Mexican species are most likely to show themselves. By November the pattern of winter invaders has become clear. These are birds that Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count compilers hope will stay in place until late December. The deserts still hold surprises, and the cool fall days make even a day at the Salton Sea (with its world famous waterfowl displays) a very pleasant experience.

This month's fall migration has been quite exciting by any standard — so let's get right to a rather lengthy list of interesting reports.

The 31 August LAAS pelagic out of San Pedro had a long list of species including five **Red-billed Tropicbirds** (John Levine).

**Blue-footed Boobies** invaded the southeast portion of Southern California. Alerted by a sighting at Mystic Lake, Riverside County, on 31 August (Mike Patten), birders found at least five birds at the Salton Sea. Also on 31 August a very rare **Red-footed Booby** was well seen and photographed on a pelagic trip to Santa Cruz Island (David Koeppel). A **Neotropic Cormorant** was found at the south end of the Salton Sea on 1 September (Curtis Marantz, Guy McCaskie, MP).

Single **Tricolored Herons** turned

up at Huntington Beach on 28 August (Jim Pike) and at Port Hueneme on 13 September (Don DesJardin). Single **Reddish Egrets** were reported from the Santa Ana River near Anaheim (JP) and from Bolsa Chica on 14 September (Andrew Howe, Richard Barth). A **Zone-tailed Hawk** was seen over Hermosa Beach on 16 September (Kevin Larson).

**R**ecords of rare and unusual bird sightings reported in this column should be considered tentative pending review by **NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD NOTES** regional editors or, if appropriate, by the California Birds Records Committee.

Send your bird observations with as many details as possible to:

Hank Brodkin  
27 1/2 Mast Street  
Marina Del Rey, CA 90292  
Phone: (310) 827-0407  
E-Mail: hankb@kaiwan.com

or call Jon Fisher at (818) 544-5009.

A **Solitary Sandpiper** was reported from Galileo Park near California City on 28 August (Dan Guthrie), and a **Stilt Sandpiper** was in the Los Angeles River at Willow Street on 2 September (Mitch Heindel). A **Red Phalarope** was seen at the south end of the Salton Sea on 7 September (Mike Fighner, Ron Saldino).

A **Pomarine Jaeger** was off Salton City on 6 September (Cosmo

Bloom, Gerard Phillips) and a **Black Tern** was in Malibu Lagoon on 5 September (Robert Weissler). Single out-of-place **White-winged Doves** were reported from Encino on 25 August (Jean Brandt) and from Galileo Park on 28 August (DG). A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was seen at Butterbreyt Springs on 2 September (Raymond Schep). The seasons first **Lewis' Woodpecker** sighting was from Galileo Park on 21 September (Raymond Schep).

A very rare **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was seen and heard at Galileo on 11 September (Jon Dunn), and a **Tropical Kingbird** was sighted in Baker, San Bernardino County, on 6 September (Daniel Cooper, Barry Lyon).

Sightings of **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, starting with a 28 August report from Galileo (DG), and **Pygmy Nuthatches**, including a 20 August report from Tarzana (Jerry & Laurette Maisel), signaled the beginning of a winter invasion of these species. The first **Sage Thrasher** reported in the basin this season was in Veterans Park, Sylmar, on 3 September (Doug Martin), and the first **Cedar Waxwings** consisted of a flock of 16 birds in Brentwood on 5 September (Larry Schmahl).

Warbler reports include single **Virginia's** at Galileo on 2 September (RS), at Jackson Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains (Martin Byhower), and at Bette Davis Park in Burbank on 7 September (GP); a

## FILED TRIPS

*Continued from page 8*

**Chestnut-sided** at Galileo on 6 September (David Blue); a **Black-throated Blue** at Eagle Mountain, Riverside County, on 20 September (Chuck Price); a **Grace's** at Chilao on 7 September (MB); single **Blackpolls** in San Dimas on 16 September (DC) and at Hansen Dam on 16 September (DM); a **Black-and-White** in Zuma Canyon on 2 September (Tim Kastelle, Nancy Pachana); an **Ovenbird** at Sand Dune Park, Manhattan Beach, on 21 September; and a **Northern Water-thrush** at Hansen Dam on 17 September (RB, DM).

A **Painted Bunting** was seen at California City on 1 September (Matt Heindel). A **Vesper Sparrow** — uncommon on the coastal slope — was at the Peck Water Conservation Park in El Monte on 16 September (Peter Barnes), and a **Black-throated Sparrow** was at Malibu Lagoon on 5 September (Kimball Garrett, RW). A **Lark Bunting** was reported from Galileo on 14 September (RP).

Good Birding! ☺

## BOAT TRIPS

 **Saturday, November 16 —** 8-hour trip on the *R.V. Vantuna* to the Palos Verdes Escarpment and Redondo Canyon. \$25.

 **Friday, November 29 —** 30-hour trip on the *M.V. Vanguard* (10 P.M. Friday to 4 A.M. Sunday). Northwest out of Ventura past Point Conception to Arguello Canyon and west to the California Continental Shelf with several daylight hours along the shelf. \$260/double bunk, \$150/single bunk, meals included.

**Note: Linda Lewis**, Marine Mammal expert, will be one of our leaders when her schedule permits.



hope to see Sandhill Cranes, elk and pronghorn. Please carpool, if possible, or avail your vehicle to others. \$15 per person, \$5 surcharge for 1-person vehicles. 10 car limit. Your phone number will be released for carpooling unless you request otherwise. Meet at 8:00 A.M. in Maricopa. Sign-up with Audubon House for exact directions and information. Reserve accommodations with California Valley Motel at (805) 475-2363 and ask them to note LAAS affiliation. Call LAAS by December 27 if lodging is full.

**January 11 — Point Mugu NAS.** **Irwin Woldman, Bart Lane** and a base biologist will lead in this limited access area. Date tentative pending approval. Peregrine Falcon and White-winged Scoter frequently seen. Rare birds like Tropical Kingbird, Oldsquaw, Black Scoter in recent years. Must be 16 years old. No cameras. Sign-up by December 23. Include one SASE and, for each person in your request, include citizenship status, phone number, social security number and a \$5 deposit to be refunded at the gate. ☺

### Reservation and Fee Events (Limited Participation) Policy and Procedure

Reservations will be accepted ONLY if ALL the following information is supplied:

- 1) Trip desired
- 2) Names of people in your party
- 3) Phone numbers  
(a) usual and  
(b) evening before event, in case of emergency cancellation
- 4) Separate check (no cash please) to LAAS for exact amount for each trip
- 5) Self-addressed stamped envelope for confirmation and associated trip information. Send to:

LAAS Reservations  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.  
West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694.

If there is insufficient response, the trip will be cancelled two Wednesdays prior to the scheduled date (four weeks for pelagics), and you will be so notified and your fee returned. Your cancellation after that time will bring a refund only if there is a paid replacement. Millie Newton is available at Audubon House on Wednesdays from noon to 4:00 P.M. to answer questions about field trips. Our office staff is also available Tuesday through Saturday for most reservation services.

# EVENING MEETINGS

Tuesday, November 12, 1996



*Glaucous-winged Gull*

Meet at 8:00 P.M. in Plummer Park.  
Los Angeles Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard  
West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694

## Less Familiar Gulls of Southern California

**Larry Allen**, Breeding Bird Atlas Regional Coordinator, Malibu CBC Compiler, and gull expert extraordinaire will present this illustrated talk. In addition to a discussion of the field marks, molts and plumages, and sequence of maturation of the less familiar gulls, Larry will also help show how this knowledge will help separate these rarer gulls from the more regular ones. Just the program to help you get ready for the upcoming CBCs.

Tuesday, December 10, 1996

**Arnold Small**, bird photographer and author, presents "Avoiding Embarrassment in the Field."

## F I E L D T R I P S

Before setting out on any field trip, **please call the LAAS bird tape at (213) 874-1318** for special instructions or possible cancellations that may have occurred by the Thursday before the trip.

**Saturday, November 2 —**

**Sketching Birds in the Field.** Renowned bird artist **John Schmitt** will show eight klutzes how to render useful bird sketches for field documentation. Spotting scope, folding chair (plastic bag at least), pencils and sketch pad a must. Bring a book illustrating bird plumage topography. Meet at Malibu kiosk at 8:00 A.M. Phone LAAS to register for limited sign-up.

**Sunday, November 3 — Topanga State Park.** **Gerry Haigh** will

lead participants through this diverse coastal mountain area. This trip is ideal for a beginning birder or someone new in the area. A botanist is usually present. From Ventura Blvd., take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 7 miles south, then turn east uphill on Entrada Rd. (1 mile north of Topanga Village). Follow the signs and turn left into the park. Meet in the Trippet Ranch parking lot at 8:00 A.M. \$5 parking fee.

**Saturday, November 9 —**

**Franklin Canyon.** This morning walk will be led by **Steven Saffier**. Franklin Canyon is located between Sherman Oaks and Beverly Hills. Wood Ducks breed and winter in the lake. Chaparral, lakeside and oak/pine woodland habitat

will be explored. Meet in the parking lot at 7:30 A.M. From the 101 Fwy, take Coldwater Cyn. Ave. south into the hills. Immediately after Mulholland Dr. merges from the west with Coldwater Cyn. Ave., make a 90-degree right turn onto Franklin Cyn. Dr. and continue on to the nature center. The lot is past a gated drive on the left.

**Sunday, November 10 — Newport Back Bay.** Leader **Mary Carmona**. No notable high tides this month, but we'll still look for rails, Royal Tern and California Gnatcatcher. Take the 405 Fwy south to Jamboree Blvd., drive south over the channel past San Joaquin Hills Rd. to Back Bay Dr. on your right. If you get to PCH, you've gone too far. Continue to the first pullout on the left along Back Bay Dr., 1/2 mile off Jamboree Rd. Meet at 8:00 A.M. for a full day in the area. Bring lunch.

**Sunday, November 10 — Whittier Narrows Regional Park.** Join ranger **Ray Jillson** at 8:00 A.M. to view colorful migrants and resident birds including Northern Cardinal. Meet at the Nature Center at 1000 Durfee Ave. Take the 60 Fwy to South El Monte, just west of the

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